



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN PLANNING OFFICE

245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601

PHONE: (315) 785-7730 – FAX: (315) 782-9014

TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – Parking Lot, Empsall's Plaza

DATE: April 29, 2014

Request: Site Plan Approval for the construction of a parking lot and driveway at VL-1 JB Wise Place, parcels 7-01-135.000, 7-01-112.003, 7-01-114.001, and 7-01-115.000.

Applicant: Neighbors of Watertown

Proposed Use: Parking lot for mixed-use building

Property Owner: Neighbors of Watertown

Submitted:

Property Survey: No	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: N/A
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes	Construction Time Schedule: Yes
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: No

SEQRA: Type I

County Review: N/A

Zoning Information:

District: Downtown	Maximum Lot Coverage: N/A
Setback Requirements: N/A	Buffer Zone Required: N/A

Project Overview: The applicant proposes to construct additional parking spaces to serve the Empsall's Plaza building, currently under renovation. The proposed lot will be served by a one-way drive loop off the city's JB Wise public lot. The project involves roughly 6,000 square feet of new pavement, plus significant grading.

Parking: There is no parking requirement for the associated building. The applicant proposes to create 14 additional spaces for the convenience of their tenants. These are organized on an upper and lower tier.

A counter-clockwise, one-way looped drive will serve the new spaces on the upper tier. The lower tier would be accessed both from the looped drive and from an adjacent parking area owned by the nearby medical building.

At the southwest corner of the lot, the one-way drive connects to a two-way unpaved right-of-way known as Safford Lane. The applicant proposes to pave a portion of Safford Lane using a radius that would direct drivers downhill from their upper tier of parking. However, adjacent property owners still have the right to access their land across this narrow right-of-way, so it must remain open to two-way traffic. The applicant should square off the pavement so that a T-intersection is provided at this location. “Yield” signs should also be installed at the location of the proposed “Do Not Enter” signs.

The applicant should revise the curb cut radii at the entrance from JB Wise to match the existing curb and sidewalk. The spot elevations in the vicinity need to be checked as well—currently they show a 7” difference between the building corner and the edge of the sidewalk, which should be flat.

The southernmost parking space in the upper tier should have a chamfered corner to prevent unnecessary loss of green space.

As mentioned above, circulation through the lower parking tier relies on crossing adjacent land owned by the Woodruff Professional Building. Additionally, the applicant proposes adding pavement right up to the property line. The applicant should discuss the project with the owners of the medical building, and should acquire permission to work on and cross over their property, based on the currently proposed configuration. The applicant could also add separation between the two lots, or alter the proposed circulation pattern so that crossing is not required.

Sidewalks: The applicant provides sidewalks connecting Empsall’s Plaza to JB Wise parking lot. The ramp depicted appears to have a slope that is low enough to qualify as an accessible route. The applicant may consider including landings and railings where appropriate to attempt to fulfill ADA guidelines. This is not required, as accessible parking is provided on the upper tier.

Lighting: No additional lighting is shown on the plans. If the applicant proposes additional lighting, they must provide a photometric plan that includes nearby light sources (existing and imminent). If no new lighting is installed, the applicant must demonstrate that current levels are sufficient.

New light poles should match those used on Public Square. Staff recommends the installation of one double-neck fixture near the north end of the proposed retaining wall.

Drainage & Grading: The parking lot will be drained by a new catch basin, which will connect to the City’s system within JB Wise parking lot.

Landscaping: The applicant will install four trees around the upper tier parking. One tree will be added to the lower tier in an island, and three existing maples will be preserved to the north.

Miscellaneous: The applicant must provide a stamped boundary and topographic survey, showing the features outlined in the site plan application guidelines. The site plan must depict actual property lines as determined by the surveyor. Specifically, the property line between the proposed parking lot and the medical building parking lot is missing.

The applicant must separate the site plan into two sheets—one for grading and drainage, and one for site and landscaping features.

The applicant must provide an Engineering Report.

The applicant must obtain the following permits prior to construction: Storm Sewer Permit, and General City Permit.

Summary:

1. The applicant shall provide a paved T-intersection where the driveway loop connects to Safford Lane. “Yield” signs must be installed in addition to the proposed “Do Not Enter” signs.
2. The applicant shall revise the curb cut radii at the entrance from JB Wise to match the existing curb and sidewalk.
3. The applicant shall confirm or revise the spot elevations near the northeast corner of the parking lot.
4. The applicant shall add a chamfered corner to the southernmost parking space in the upper tier to prevent unnecessary loss of green space.
5. The applicant shall acquire permission from the owner of the adjacent parking lot (PN 7-01-112.002) for work on their property, and for creating a circulation pattern across their property. Alternatively, the applicant may alter the circulation pattern so that the two lots are separated.
6. The applicant shall demonstrate that current lighting levels are sufficient. If new fixtures are needed, a photometric plan must be submitted which accounts for existing and proposed light sources. Any new light poles shall match those used on Public Square, or as otherwise approved by the City Engineer.
7. The applicant shall provide a stamped boundary and topographic survey.
8. The site plan shall depict actual property lines as determined by the surveyor.
9. The applicant shall separate the site plan into two sheets—one for grading and drainage, and one for site and landscaping features.
10. The applicant shall provide an Engineering Report.

cc: City Council Members
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II
Ryan Churchill, 220 Sterling Street